

The Church of the East in India.

(A short sketch.)

Origin.

It is a well known fact that St. Thomas, the Apostle, introduced Christianity in India. After preaching Gospel to the Jews 'Lost Tribes' in Mesopotamia, he came here in search of their small colonies and landed in 52 A. D. at Maliankara, an island in the lagoon near Cranganoor, a place that is now an obscure hamlet, but was in those days, a flourishing sea port called by ancient geographers 'Muziri'. The people here were very much impressed by the purity of his life and the miracles he had performed and so, many, both the Jews and the Hindus, accepted Christian faith at the hands of St. Thomas. Christianity began to grow here partly owing to the cosmopolitan outlook of the Indians and partly owing to the benign patronage of its rulers. As a result, while Christianity was struggling for its existence in other countries, it flourished here, and the Christians lived peacefully side by side with their Hindu neighbours owing their allegiance to India as their motherland and sharing in its fortunes and calamities.

Allegiance to Babylon.

As soon as St. Thomas established 'Church' in India it became an integral part of the 'Church of the East' which was founded by St. Peter, St. Thomas, St. Addai, St. Bartholomeu and Mar Mari of the Seventy, and whose head quarters were at Selucia—Ctesiphon (Babylon) in Mesopotamia, then in the Persian Empire. This See had an independent growth from the beginning owing to geographical, political and linguistic reasons and the patriarchs of the Roman empire i.e. Rome, Antioch and Alexandria had nothing to do with it in its

administration. In fact the Church in the Roman empire was at that time being persecuted by the Roman rulers, and their persecution ceased only in A. D. 313. By that time, the Church of the East became a well-knit unit and even as early as 90 A. D, the Church of the East had nineteen episcopal sees all the way from Mesopotamia to the farthest shores of China and Japan. That the Church in India was keeping in close touch with the Mesopotamian Church even during the time of St. Thomas can be seen from the Edessan letters. In this connection it is worthwhile to note the following few lines written by H. E. Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, the secretary of the Roman Catholic Oriental Churches, in the Clergy Monthly special number in honour of St. Thomas, the Apostle of India, Vol. XVI, No. 10.

“Relations had existed from the most ancient times between Mesopotamia and India, as it has been proved recently by the excavations at Mohanjodaro which show connections existing between the Sumerian and the Proto Indian civilisation. At any time sea going merchants, availing themselves of the monsoons, may have traded all the way from Southern India to Babylonia surely such trade occurred when the Aramaic language was the customary tongue for commerce in the near East, say about the 7th century B. C.

There is no wonder, therefore, that an apostle after a stay in Edessa, which was an important centre of commercial exchange, went to preach also in India. It would explain why Christianity in India from ancient times kept close relations with Mesopotamia, with Edessa first and then with Seleucia-cetesiphon at the time when the fighting between the Roman Empire and the Sassanid dynasty forbade communications

with the West. Although they were corrupted by fabulous details and questionable doctrines, the apocryphal acts of St. Thomas written in Edessa about A. D. 200 show the true name of a king of Northern India otherwise unknown until recent times. Then, too, the Catholicos at Seleucia appointed bishops for India for many centuries.”

***Adherence to Aramaic and non participation
in doctrinal Controversies.***

The Church of the East is holding the true doctrine of Jesus Christ and His apostles and she has not been effected by the theological controversies and power politics that were raging in the Roman Empire in the early centuries of the Christian era. She uses Aramaic, the language which Jesus and the Jews of His time had spoken, in her liturgy. “The literary language of the Eastern portion of the Roman empire around the Mediterranean was Greek while the language of the Church in Persia was Aramaic. It was superseded by Greek as an official language in the Eastern Roman empire.” But the Mesopotamian Christians who were formerly Jews were not affected in any way by this change. We are proud to say that ours is the only Church which has used and still uses Aramaic for the liturgy from the very beginning up to this time. This has also helped us to understand the meaning of the Gospel as the apostles meant it to be.

It is rather unfortunate that we are nicknamed Nestorian. As John Stewart observes, “The ultimate results of the Nestorian controversy was to brand the Church of the East with a name that carries with it the stigma of heresy and which arose out of a dispute with which they had nothing whatever to do and of which they were ignorant until long after it was

over." But it is gratifying to note, that some of the modern historians have understood it and begun to say it is a misnomer. Says Rev. Fr. Hambye of Roman Catholic Seminary of Kurseong, "When mention is made of the Syro-Malabar Church, we refer to those Christians of India who, before the advent of the Portuguese, were hierarchically connected with the Chaldean Church of Mesopotamia and Persia. It was from the Chaldean Church that they received their ways of worship, which are diversely known as the Chaldean, East Syrian or even Nestorian rites, although the last of these is a misnomer." (Preface to Eastern Christianity in India by H. E. Cardinal E. Tisserant.)

Growth

The Christians of Malabar were at times reinforced by Syrian colonists and merchants who gave them greater vigour and solidarity. Thus we see the arrival of Thomas of Cana in 345 A. D. along with 400 Syrians and a Metropolitan from Mesopotamia, and also of Mar Sabrison and Mar Prodh in about 800 A. D. with a large party of Mesopotamians. These Christians were granted great privileges by the local rulers and in social status they were ranked with the upper class Hindus. Their life was also very exemplary as contrasted with the life of Christians after the coming of the Portuguese.

Raised to a Metropolitan See.

Till 760 A. D. the Church in India was in the arch diocese of the Metropolitan of Riwardashir and because of the Metropolitan's neglect to send bishops to India, India was raised to the rank of the Metropolitan see and henceforward the Patriarch himself used to consecrate Metropolitans for India. Thus the

Church of the East expanded and had bishops and churches all over India. And it was the only Church in India before the advent of the Portuguese. "Through its whole history the Church in India was under the direction and control of the Patriarch of the Church of the East, the greatest missionary Church the world has ever known" (Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Vol 10. P. 459).

Zenith of Power.

During the 12th and 13th century the Church of the East was at the zenith of its glory; and she had churches all over Asia. "Indeed the difficulty is to find a place in all Asia where Nestorian missionaries had not gone. They were checked neither by Siberian snow or by the tropical heat of Java," (John Stewart P. XXXI). And Roman Catholic Donald Attwater observes in his book 'Catholic Eastern Churches' "for eight hundred years the Nestorian Church was, with fluctuations of prosperity, a mighty organisation, one whose missionary enterprise is unsurpassed in the history of Christianity. It had 25 Metropolitan sees with probably two hundred Bishoprics, extending to China and India." According to Fr. Inchakkalodi, in the 12th century the Nestorian Church had 45 Metropolitans, 200 Bishops and 80,000,000 faithful. It was no wonder then that at that time there was not a place in India where we had no churches. From Kashmir to Cape Comorin all over India, the visitors used to see our churches. But one of the causes of the decline of this Church was the invasion of Jenghiz Khan and later on by Timur. Even then the Church in India did not die out; Nicolo de Conti visited Mylapore in 1425 and says, "the body of St. Thomas lies honourably buried in a large and beautiful church and that it was venerated by Nestorians who

inhabited the place to the number of thousand." (Keay's History P. 29)

The Advent of the Portuguese.

But the Malabar church has a different sad tale to tell. "The downfall of the Nestorian Church in India (or rather South India) was due neither to reversion to paganism nor to any persecution by native princes but to the pressure of the Portuguese inquisition and the proselytizing energy of Rome." (W. W. Hunter The Indian Empire).

His Eminence Cardinal E. Tisserant writes,

"Until the coming of the Portuguese at the close of the fifteenth century, the only regular hierarchical relations the Christian communities of India had, were with the catholicosate of Seleucia-Ctesiphon..... Hence this much seems certain that the Church of India, so carefully preserved during the centuries by the catholicosate of Seleucia, always enjoyed bishops and priests in an almost uninterrupted succession." (Eastern Christianity in India Page 101)

About the Malabar Church Dr. Medlycott, the first Roman Catholic Bishop of Trichur writes in the Catholic Encyclopaedia vol 14. P. 682, "The Holy see was fully aware that the Malabar Christians were under the control of the Nestorian Patriarch. When Julius III gave Sulaka his bull of nomination as the Catholic Chaldean Patriarch, he distinctly laid down the same extent of jurisdiction which has been claimed and controlled by his late Nestorian predecessor It becomes necessary to fix this historical truth clearly because during this decade some of the younger generation in Malabar have begun to deny this historical fact. They would wish people to believe all the Portuguese missionaries, bishops,

priests and writers were completely mistaken when they styled them Nestorians in belief and because of this false report all subsequent writers continued to call them Nestorians. The reader who has gone through the statement of facts above related must be conscious that such an attempt at distorting or boldly denying public facts is utterly hopeless. They maintain in support of their false view that there always had been a small body among the Chaldeans in Mesopotamia who remained attached to the true faith and from them they received their bishops. This plea is historically false, for the bishops they received, all came to them from the Nestorians and as to the hypothesis of the existence during all these centuries back of a Catholic party among the Nestorian Chaldeans, it is too absurd to be discussed."

When the Portuguese landed at Calicut in 1498, they were surprised to see a flourishing community of Christians here. At first they thought that the Indian Christians were Roman Catholics and would stand by them in their political manoeuvres, but soon they understood that all the Indian Christians were members of the Church of the East.

"They acknowledged a gentoo sovereign but they were governed in temporal concerns by the Bishop of Angamala. He still asserted his ancient title of Metropolitan of India, but his real jurisdiction was exercised in fourteen hundred churches and he was entrusted to with the care of two hundred thousand souls..... Instead of owning themselves the subjects of the Roman Pontiff, the spiritual and temporal monarch of the globe, they adhered like their ancestors, to the communion of the Nestorian Patriarch and the bishops whom he ordained at Mosul traversed the dangers of the sea and land to reach their diocese on

the coast of Malabar. In their Syrian liturgy the names of Theodre and Nestorius were piously commemorated The title of Mother of God was offensive to their ears When her image was first presented to the disciples of St. Thomas, they indignantly exclaimed 'we are Christians, not idolators' and their simple devotion was content with the veneration of the Cross." (Gibbon - Decline and Fall of the Roman empire chapter 47)

Soon the Portuguese began to take steps to bring the Indian Christians to the obedience of the Pope. 'The end will justify the means' was the principle adopted by them and to realise their goal they employed all means, fair or foul, persuasive or treacherous, against all Christian teachings. First of all they decided that no bishop from the Nestorian Patriarch should land in India and whosoever tried to reach India as pastors of the Church of the East was put to death on the way to India or kept in captivity throughout their lives in Goa, and it was very easy for them since they were commanding the Arabian Sea at that time. Thus they cut away all correspondence between the Patriarch and his flock in India. (See Visschers' Letters from Malabar).

"To some extent they (Portuguese) succeeded in this, but notwithstanding all efforts to prevent them, three Nestorian bishops managed to reach Malabar coast Mar Jacob, Mar Abraham, Mar Simon..... Mar Abraham was taken prisoner once and sent to Rome but escaped and after his return was Nestorian Metropolitan in Malabar until his death in A. D. 1597. Mar Simon also was taken prisoner soon after his ordination, but failed to escape and died in captivity." (John Stewart M. A. PhD.—Nestorian Missionary Enterprise, P. 125-126).

Even then, the Christians in India refused to accept Pope as their Universal Pastor. Then more cruel steps were resorted to by the Portuguese to compel the Christians here to recognise Pope as their head. By their superior military strength they were able to press the native rulers to coerce the Christians in their territories and with their help the Portuguese began to persecute the Christians in all possible ways. An inquisition was set up at Goa; and many of the Nestorian bishops, priests and deacons were captured and burnt at the stake. Innumerable were the sons of the Church of the East who thus sacrificed their lives for the sake of upholding the faith of their forefathers.

The Notorious Synod of Diamper 1599

The climax to these tortures was reached in 1599 at the time of Alexio de Menezes, the Arch bishop of Goa. He called the historically notorious synod of Diamper. (Diamper or Udayamperoor is about 12 miles from Ernakulam and was in those days a commercial centre.) "The object of the synod was given in detail in the circular Menezies had sent out which has been carefully preserved among other things. The circular mentions. 'We give you all, and everyone of you in particular to understand, that the most Holy Father, Pope Clement VIII, our Lord Bishop of Rome, and Vicar of our Lord Jesus Christ upon earth, at this time presiding in the Church of God, having sent two briefs directed to us, one on the 27th January, in the year 1595, and the other on the 21st of the same month, in the year 1597, in which, by virtue of his pastoral office, and that universal power bequeathed to the supreme, holy, and Apostolic chair of St. Peter over all the churches in the world, by Jesus Christ, the son of God, our Lord and

Redeemer, he commanded us, upon the death of Archbishop Mar Abraham, to take possession of this Church and Bishopric, so as not to suffer any Bishop or prelate, coming from Babylon, to enter therein, as has hitherto been the custom, all that come from thence being schismatics, heretics and Nestorians, out of the obedience of the Holy Roman Church, and subject to the Patriarch of Babylon, the head of the said heresy; and to appoint a governor or Apostolical vicar to rule the said diocese both in spirituals and temporals, until such time as the Holy Roman Church provide it of a proper pastor, which being read by us, we were desirous to execute the Apostolical mandates with due reverence and obedience” (Sri. P. Thomas-Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan P. 93)

Pope in the letter of April 1, 1599 wished all success for the attempt of Menezes in holding the synod. (See Sri. N. J. Joseph's Deeparchana P. 145-146).

The Synod was held on 1st June 1599 and in which by sheer force of arms the Archbishop compelled the Malabar Christians to accept Pope as their religious head; and destroyed all the books of Nestorians in order to make secure their attachment to Rome. “Armed thus with the temporal authority of the heathen king whose good offices he did not disdain to use in coercing the Christians, De Meneses went from church to church and used all possible methods to get the St. Thomas Church to accept the supremacy of Rome” (Sri. K. M. Panikkar—The Malabar and the Portuguese P. 191). “The old liturgies of the Syrian Church were either destroyed or altered beyond recognition. All the books that were laid hold of were committed to the flames. Everything possible was done to cut off the Syrian Christians

entirely from the past and make their attachment to Roman Church secure.” (F. E. Keay M.A. D. Litt. A History of the Syrian Church in India P. 42). “About this great bonfire it is written that it is to this vandalism that we must attribute the scarcity of information concerning the earlier history of Thomas Xians.” (Richter op cit page 8).

“This system of Govt. went on until the historical Synod of Diamper 1599 under the auspices of the famous Archbishop Menezis. The Portuguese put an end to the administration of St. Thomas Christians by the Syrian bishops and the spiritual sovereignty of the Patriarch of Babylon.” (Rev. Mgr. Paul Kakkassery.)

Popes Clement VIII in the letter of May 21st, 1601 and Pius IX in the letter Speculatores Super congratulated the people of Malabar for accepting the Roman supremacy (See Deeparchana P. 148)

It is with great reluctance that we mention about these unfortunate events of the past but we are only stating true facts that brought about the decline of the Church of the East in India.

All did not become Romo-Syrians.

“But his (Menezes) success was only partial” (Sri. Panikkar--Malabar and the Portuguese) Many, especially those who were on the hills and away from Portuguese coastal command, refused to attend the Synod. They declared their allegiance to the Nestorian Patriarch. “Thirty thousand refused to abandon the errors of Nestorius or to submit to the one Catholic Apostolic Church” (Strickland and Marshall-Catholic Mission in South India P. 34.)

Coonan Cross Revolt of 1653.

Even the majority of those who went over to Rome under pressure, when they got an opportunity,

asserted their independence. "Not until the advent of the Dutch, however, were they in a position to give expression to their feelings in the matter. The defeat of the Portuguese by the Dutch gave them the opportunity they desired. "The immediate cause of the revolt is stated to have been the murder by the Portuguese of a Nestorian bishop named Mar Attila, who was seized on his way to Malabar, carried prisoner to Cochin, and taken thence to Goa where he was burned at the stake. The Jesuits were incapable of defending the power which they had abused. The arms of forty thousand were pointed against their falling tyrants, and the Indian arch-deacon assumed the character of a bishop till a fresh supply of episcopal gifts and Syrian missionaries could be obtained from the Patriarch of Babylon Out of a total of 200,000 persons only four hundred (whether individuals or families is not stated) remained true to their Roman Catholic faith". (See Nestorian Missionary Enterprise pages 127-128) Before the large stone cross there, similar to that usually erected in front of Syrian churches, they solemnly renounced their allegiance to the Church of Rome and declared that they would no longer submit to its authority. The number being so great that they could not all touch the cross at once, they connected themselves with this sacred symbol by means of ropes tied to it". (Keay's History of Syrian Church in India P. 44.)

Arrival of Mar Gregory, the Jacobite Metropolitan in 1665.

Although Cochin was taken by the Dutch in A. D. 1653, the Portuguese still retained Goa, and with it as their headquarters, they were able effectively to prevent intercourse by sea between the non-Catholic Christians of the Malabar Coast and the Patriarch of Babylon" (Nestorian Missionary Enterprise P. 129.)

So many of the letters sent to the Patriarch of Babylon did not reach there or the bishops whom he had sent, were not able to reach India. So many of the Coonen Cross secessionists found it very difficult to proceed without a bishop. It was by this time, that the Jacobite Metropolitan from Jerusalem managed to reach Malabar and people welcomed him believing that he was sent by the Patriarch of Babylon "No one apparently knew enough theology to be worried by the possibility of doctrinal revolution and the bishop was willing to conform to local custom as far as he could. He was received at first as a bishop of their old tradition and created the first doubts in the minds of the faithful when he celebrated mass in a way they had not seen before" (L. W. Brown, Bishop of Uganda-The Indian Christians of St. Thomas P. 111.) "When this took place the Syrian Church was henceforth connected with the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch" (Keay's History P. 46.) "Whater has been written in favour of an early connection between the Church of Malabar and the Patriarchate of Antioch and of all the East, There is no historical probability whatsoever, or even the slightest evidence that any Indian group of Christians ever came under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Antioch whether Catholic, Greek dissident or even Jacobite" (Cardinal Tisserent's Eastern Christianity in India P. 17.)

Soon the Pope sent Carmelite priests to reconcile with the Syrians. They were able to do this and to a certain extent they were successful. And so a good number again joined the Roman Catholic church as they found it difficult to get their own bishops from Babylon.

The Church of the East not extinct at any time.

But a good number of the faithful of the Church of the East remained firm in their belief and

waited for their own bishops; and most of them were in the north (erstwhile Cochin State). They were the people who had not taken part in the notorious synod of Diamper. And these people occasionally could get bishops from their Patriarch of the East. Thus we hear of Mar Simon and Mar Gabriel. "The first Nestorian Bishop to reach Malabar from the West after 1663 of whom we have any record, was Mar Simon." "He was captured by the Portuguese who led him prisoner to Pondicherry where they kept him in iron" (See Visscher's Letters from Malabar. "The next, Mar Gabriel, dates from A.D. 1705 and continued there until A. D. 1730 or 1731. His influence was so great among the Uniat Syrians, as those who had accepted the headship of Rome were called, that at one time they were on the point of renouncing Rome and attaching themselves to him." (Nestorian Missionary Enterprise P. 131) History also records the arrival of Mar John in 1747 and a few others in succession so as to keep the faith undying.

"Dutch Governor Moens while writing in 1781 refers to the Syrian Christians as partly Nestorian and partly Jacobites. Those conflicting religious opinions, he adds, predominated in turn according to the arrival of new bishops who are Nestorian or Eutychean" (Galetti. The Dutch in Malabar P. 101. And Sardar K. M. Panikkar writes in his book Malabar and the Dutch, "Even the non-Roman Christians were not united in points of doctrines. There were two parties, one Nestorian and another Jacobite, who were fighting theological battles among themselves" "In A. D. 1787 and again in A. D. 1813 Nestorian churches in Cochin are referred to, and the Roman Catholic divine Paoli, writing in A. D. 1796, said there were then sixty four Nestorian and thirty two

Jacobite churches in the States of Travancore and Cochin" (Nestorian Missionary Enterprise P. 131 see also Keay's History page 92)

The Foundation of the present Big Church.

It was from these scattered remnants of the members of this Church of the East who were living in different parts of the erstwhile Cochin State that the famous Sakthan Thampuran had chosen fifty two families to settle down in Trichur with the object of promoting the commercial interests of the town, and by the Theetooram (Royal Charter) of 990 M. E. (1814 A. D.) granted to them free of tax a place, the spot on which the present Marth Mariam Church, the Cathedral Church of the Church of the East was erected to worship God according to their own faith and tradition. That they were members of the Church of the East can be clearly seen from the following: "The litigation connected with the case (the Trichur Church case) extended over a period of fully twelve years. There was thus ample time for every aspect of the matter to be gone into and all available documentary or other evidences to be produced. It is admitted by both parties, that for more than two hundred years after A. D. 1665, in addition to the Jacobite Thomas Christians and the Romo-Syrians, there existed a third section called Syro-Chaldeans who were Nestorians prior to A. D. 1599..... The difficulty as to their origin would have been more easily solved if the fact mentioned by Strickland and Marshall that there were thirty thousand dissenters from the decree of the Synod of Diamper had not been lost sight of. That the origin of the Syro-Chaldeans, the present day Nestorians, goes further back than to the Coonan Cross becomes increasingly evident." (Nestorian Missionary Enterprise P. 130-131).

His Grace late Mar Thimotheus Metropolitan.

We were exceptionally fortunate in securing — 52 years ago—His Grace Mar Themotheus as our shepherd, thanks to the benign care of His Holiness Maran Mar Benjimin Shimon, Patriarch of hallowed memory, and his solicitude for the Syro-Chaldean flock in India. And MAR YOHANNAN MAM-DHANA CHURCH, the Golden Jubilee of which we are celebrating, is the first church built and consecrated by His Grace—the sole place of worship for the Church of the East during the protracted period of litigation upon which much love and affection were bestowed. Many years had not passed before the enemies of this Ancient Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East entangled His Grace in a merciless litigation. The Courts of Cochin State decreed in favour of His Grace but it took away most of H. G.'s precious time and energy. Yet His Grace, during the rest of his life, worked hard for the flock in India. His Grace constructed a number of churches in different parishes, organised institutions like Mar Appream Sunday School, the Mar Narsai Press and started several educational institutions. His Grace has also written many books for the spiritual enlightenment of the members of the Church. By His Grace's intense spirituality, inspiring teachings, and above all magnetic personality His Grace had attracted not only the Christians but the Hindus and Muslims as well. In this connection we are happy to say that H. G. Mar Themotheus, by virtue of his life long work in India had fully identified with us, and His Grace had shown an active sympathy both by word and action in our struggle for freedom. He was a true admirer of Gandhiji and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and had availed of all opportunities to meet

them and to represent them in glowing terms in his speeches.

His Grace's demise in 1945 threw the entire flock in great sorrow and anxiety.

The Worthy Successor.

After seven years of patient waiting and prayers we are fortunate to have as our shepherd His Grace Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan who was consecrated at Turlock, U. S. A., on May 4, 1952, by His Holiness Maran Mar Ishai Shimun XXIII, the Catholicose Patriarch of the East. His Grace reached India in July of the same year. As soon as His Grace arrived here His Grace set to work for the expansion of this Church and soon proved himself to be the worthy successor of His Grace's illustrious predecessor. During this short period, His Grace constructed seven churches and to feed the spiritual needs of the members outside Kerala His Grace has arranged touring missions. A large and well equipped seminary was built for training the clergy. With a view to lead the youths in the proper path, a Youth Association was started. The Mahilasamajam under His Grace's patronage grew in strength. They are now running a Nursery School and an Ashramam for women. It is during the regime of His Grace that the Middle School of Chelakottukara was raised to a High School and named after Mar Themotheus in honour of His Grace's predecessor. Besides, His Grace has written many religious books for the members of the Church of the East in the Middle East and also encouraged local people to write such books in Malayalam. Now His Grace is absorbed in the printing of Hudra (an elaborate and all comprehensive prayer book used in the Church of the East) containing about 4000 pages, a tremendous task which the Church of the East has not yet attempted,

but which we hope, will be completed within a few months- a lasting monument of His Grace's untiring work in the cause of this ancient Church.

A Bright Future.

It is true that 'weakened' by persecution and lured from its true goal by compromise', this most ancient Christian community of India has ceased to be a big force. But we hope that we have a bright future in independent India especially under the government of Sri Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and that in the near future we can shed the true light of Jesus Christ and His teachings throughout India as we had done before.

The dates of the origin of Episcopal Churches in Kerala.

- A. D. 52 St. Thomas in India-The Church of the East.
 1542 St. Xavier-Latin Christians.
 1599 Romo Syrians (Chaldean Rite)
 1665 Jacobite Syrians.
 1771 Independent Jacobite Church of Thozhiur.
 1836 Anglican Church.
 1836 Marthomite Church.
 1932 Romo Syrians (Jacobite Rite)

Doctrine of the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East.

The doctrine of this church is based on the Nicean Creed of the Three Hundred and Eighteen Fathers. This is recited at every service of public worship.

The Church recognizes the first two General Councils, namely those of Nicea and Constantinople, as well as all the recognized Fathers of the Church of the period of these two Councils.

It rejects the Council of Ephesus, 431 A. D. maintaining that it was not ecumenical, and that its proceedings were illegal and contrary to the spirit and teachings of Christ. The Church within the Persian Empire was not represented in this Council.

Doctrine of Christ

The Church of the East teaches that Jesus Christ was Perfect God and Perfect Man. It acknowledges two Natures and two Q'numa in one Person of the Son of God,—one authority. Q'numa is an Aramaic term whose nearest equivalent in the Western Tongues is the Greek term "hypostasis," or the English word "substance"—the underlying essence of being.

The Church condemns the use of the term "Yaldath Alaha"—bearer of God—in referring to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and uses instead the term Yaldath Mshikha—bearer of Christ.

Sacraments

The Church holds seven sacraments, namely: Priesthood, Baptism, Anointing, the Holy Eucharist (which is called Qurbana Qaddisha) Remission of Sins, Holy Leaven, and the Sign of the Cross.

In making the sign of the cross, three fingers are joined representing the Holy Trinity. The worshipper

first touches the mouth, saying "Glory"; then the forehead "To the Father"; the breast "To the Son" the right shoulder, first, then the left, saying "and the Holy Spirit."

Baptism is administered by immersion, usually forty days after birth. It is accompanied by anointing with sacred oil. Membership of the Church includes all baptized persons. Auricular confession (in the presence of the priest alone) is recognized, but not generally practised. Instead an individual absolution is given when requested, or is necessary in certain cases. A general absolution for remission of sins is given to the whole congregation, before the partaking of the Holy Communion.

Holy Communion is the sacrament by which, through faith, the true Body and Blood of Christ are partaken, under the forms of bread and wine. It is always received fasting, and is given to both clergy and laity in both kinds.

The Blessed Virgin and the saints are venerated. We pray to them for intercession. Prayers are said for the dead.

Images or icons are forbidden. A simple cross is the only object of veneration permitted.

The Holy Leaven refers to the fact that a portion of the original Bread, used by Christ at the last Supper was brought to the East by the Apostle Thaddeus (Mar Addai) and in every Holy Communion ever since the bread used is made from meal continuous with that used in the first Lord's supper.

The version of the scriptures used is in the original Aramaic in which the Gospel was first preached and written—the form known as the Peshitta version, or "Simple and True."

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The Apostolic liturgy of St. James of Jerusalem brother of our Lord who celebrated the first Qurbana, or Holy Communion is still in use in the Church of the East, without variation or change. It is known among us by the name of saints Addai and Mari who brought the Liturgy from Jerusalem to Edessa.

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The priesthood of the Church of the East has nine orders as the church had received from the hands of the Holy Apostles Mar Patros, Mar Thoma, Mar Addai, Mar Bar—Tulmai and Mar Mari.

Patriarch, Metropolitans and Bishops occupy the place of Cherubims, Seraphims and Thrones; Archdeacons, Choropiscopy and priests, the place of Hosts, Dominions and Powers; Deacons, Sub-deacons and Readers, the place of Principalities, Archangels and Angels. In other words the church on earth is one with the Church above and not separate.

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The present Patriarch, the 119th. successor of St. Peter is His Holiness Maran Mar Eshai Shimun 23rd whose head quarters is now at San Francisco, U. S. A.

The Patriarchal Representative in India is His Grace Mar Thoma Darmo Metropolitan whose head quarters is at Trichur, South India.

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